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Nation

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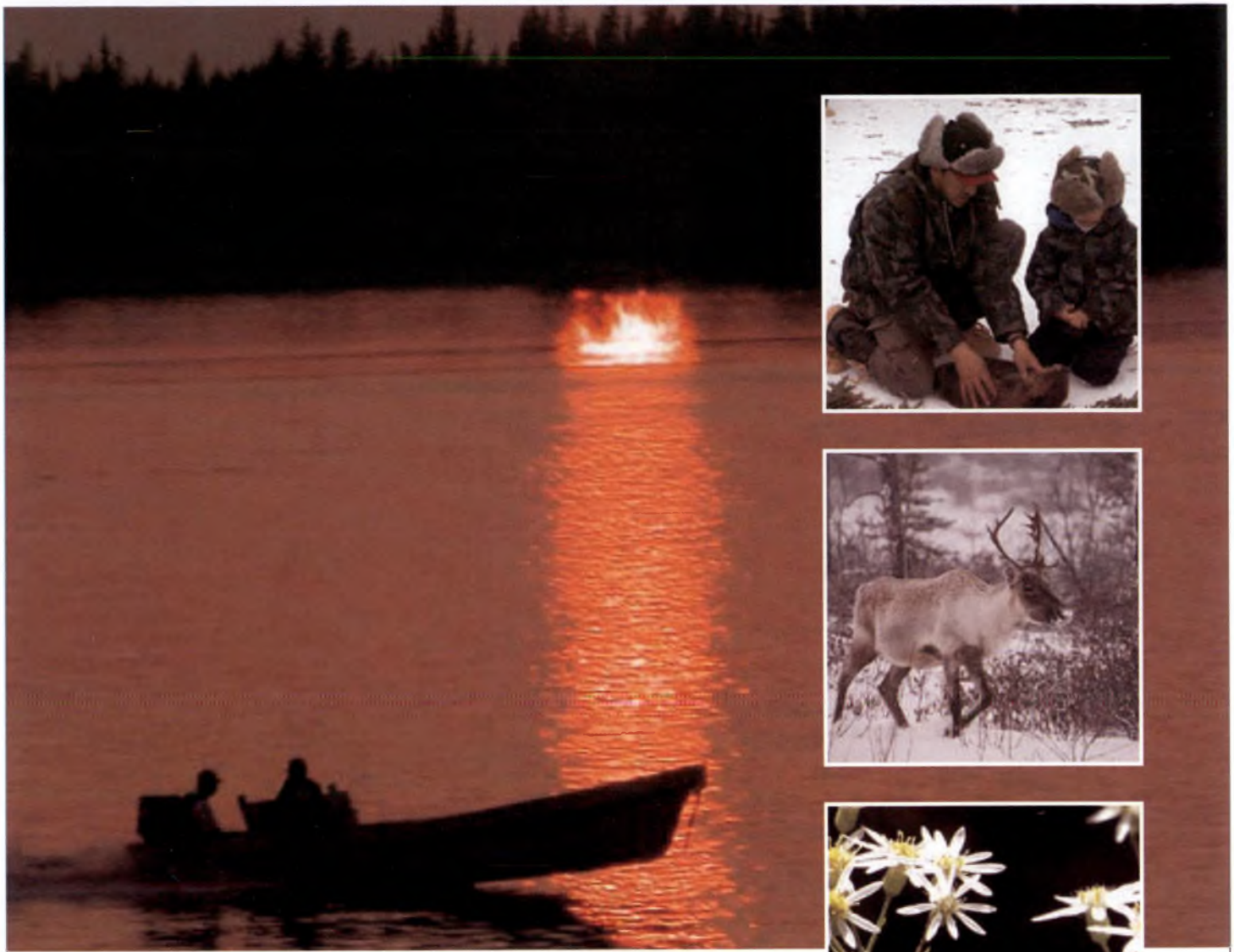

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editorial

The meaning of bullsh*t

By Will Nicholls

I know I will get more than one comment on this editorial but it seems to me there is a lot of B.S. in and around the Cree territory.

Some of it is noticed and commented on while other forms seem to go unnoticed as the bullsh*t works its magic. So let's start by looking at the meaning of this vulgar slang known as bullsh*t a.k.a. B.S.

B.S. according to the dictionary means:

1. Foolish, deceitful or boastful language.
2. Something worthless, deceptive or insincere.
3. Insolent talk or behavior.
4. Nonsense, lies or exaggeration.

The verb form of B.S. means to speak insincerely or without regard for facts or truths.

To help look at the meaning of B.S. within and outside of Eeyou Istchee I refer to two prime examples.

The first and most recent is the recent dyke that failed at the closed-down Opimiska mine. It concerned a settling pond containing mine tailings flooding into the Slam Creek which flows into the Obatigaumau River and in turn to the Waswanipi River. It was said that Environment Canada has done testing and there is no risk to human health. There are others who say they smell a strong whiff of B.S.

They could very well be right as in 1965 the Joe Mann Mine suffered a similar incident. Historical information from Cree tallymen reported that many fish were killed at this time in the Nemenjiche River. The levels of contamination when sampled by geologist Christopher Covel in March 2001, revealed levels of arsenic, chromium and lead in the sediment that exceeded the Canadian environmental guidelines. Water samples showed copper, chromium, cyanide, mercury and zinc exceeded Canadian environmental quality guidelines for the protection of aquatic life.

This was 36 years after the incident so there could be a problem with a little or a lot of B.S. coming down the pipe. Only time and science will tell whether or not this is the case.

Then let's take a look at the Paix des braves deal. Yes, the guaranteed money is still flowing on a yearly basis but something is reeking of B.S.

Remember the promise of revenue sharing the Cree were promised? An initial sum of $1.4 million was received after a few years of waiting. Since then the Cree Nation has received nothing.

Revenue sharing was one of the new things and referred to everywhere as the goose that laid the golden egg for the Cree. Let's face it the $70 million was just to fulfill the terms and obligations of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

Revenue sharing was one of the benefits of selling one more river. The reason why we have not received anything is that Quebec refuses to release any figures to the Cree on how much revenue is generated by such resource extractions as forestry or mining. The promised new relationship between the Cree and Quebec now looks like so much B.S.

Perhaps it is understandable as gold has reached a high of $929 an ounce on July 9. It was only a little over $300 an ounce at the time of the signing. Imagine having to share the revenue now?

I almost feel sorry for the Grand Council's Quebec Negotiator Abel Bosum having to shovel through the vast amount of B.S. to get to the true figures. Electricity sales are at an all-time high and forestry product prices have risen some 40 to 60 percent in U.S. dollars since early 2006.

I can only hope that you all have learnt what the meaning of B.S. means these days. Let's all grab a shovel and get it out of Eeyou Istchee.

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cover photo by:
Stanley Saganash

by Sonny Orr

Crimes throughout history

In many ways, crime is something that seems to be hard to swallow. It's not likeable and treacherously dirty, not to mention illegal in many countries and downright dastardly wrong. But in some ways, crime does pay a little tribute to those who most likely wish that it wasn't for them.

Some TV shows are based on real-life crime and trials, but others focus on the bumbling crook, the guy who probably wishes that he never got caught that way again, yet, you expect him to, anyway. A famous one is the guy who gets caught stuck in the chimney posing as Santa, or in a more dramatic case, where the storekeeper fights back with little more than a stick of gum and wins.

In the Cree world, we have our bumbling crooks too. Take for instance, the times local stores would be robbed, only to have hot contraband sold in overnight enterprises, dealing cigarettes and booze. This leads everyone to believe that they were the culprits because of the noticeable flow of customers to and from their midnight store – usually the back door of their home – immediately after the heist.

Robbery used to be confined to a little five-finger discount for a pack of cigarettes or a pop and chips. But somehow, for many who dared try their luck at theft, it became addictive, probably more addictive because easy money can feed so many addictions at a time. So the scale of theft becomes more of the armed robbery type, done by the same age group that used to steal the pop and chips back in the day before easy tabs on your can of cola.

Speaking of pop and chips, in those days, most of us had to carry around a can opener. For a few others, they just chewed a hole through the thick tin, not the flimsy aluminum cans we have today. Back then, you had to work out in the gyms for days on end just to bend the can with your bare hands and you were considered top gun if you could crush more than three cans in a row. Unfortunately for those who dared to use their teeth on a frequent basis they had the occasional crack develop in their enamel leading to some weird sense of accomplishment and insane headaches. 'Nuff said.

But today's crooks can be quite the handful for our local CSI (Cree Style Investigators). Take for instance – again back in the day – when an island-wide manhunt for a young lad, who had ripped off a gin bottle from an old lady, ensued the day after the incident, and the young lad was walking off a bad hangover. The local CSI drove up to him and shone a flashlight in his bloodshot eyes and asked him if he had seen the culprit. "No, I didn't," he answered truthfully, as he was not the type of guy to look at himself in mirrors or any other reflections. The manhunt continued vainly, as the young lad escaped and slipped back into obscurity, back into the night he walked, scot-free.

Today, crime is a serious matter, not to be taken lightly. As in all crimes, there are victims, and they usually have nothing to laugh about.

So on another matter, I will change from crime reporting, as many loyal fans are committing crimes now for notoriety's sake and a mention in the famous *Nation* magazine. I hereby pledge not to write about further crimes, thereby reducing crime as a result – albeit extremely slightly.

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What's her 411?

Newly elected Youth Grand Chief Stacy Bear discusses her past, present and future

By Amy German

Not only is Stacy Bear the first-ever female Youth Grand Chief of the Cree Nation but at 28 she is bringing a sense of humility and wisdom beyond her years to the table that perhaps only someone as evolved and endearing as her could.

Though bubbly and brimming with self-confidence now, life was not always that way for Bear. She began with the Youth Council at the age of 16 and continued on with the council becoming local Youth Chief after she completed an Aboriginal Studies certificate at Algonquin College in Ottawa. College life however was not an easy time for Bear.

Though she wanted to continue her studies after college, Bear found herself unable to as a result of frequent panic attacks and bouts of anxiety. After careful consultation with a psychologist and counsellors, she resolved to heal herself by "getting away from all of the bad stuff" and by quitting both smoking and drinking.

"It was one of the obstacles that I had to overcome and it took me three years to do that. It was one of life's real challenges so far," said Bear of her healing process.

At the same time she feels that because of this experience she is in a position to reach the youth of the communities as she knows what it's like to be in their situation.

In her mind the biggest thing lacking for the Cree youth is parental support, particularly when it comes to education. With the dropout rate at almost 50% across Canada for Aboriginal youth, Bear feels that things could be different for kids in the Cree Nation if parents showed more love and support by becoming more involved in their children's schooling.

She also feels that increased transparency in parent-child communication might be able to reduce the statistics when it comes to other social problems. "I don't think parents talk to their kids enough about sex, alcohol and the effects of drugs. I am pretty sure that a lot of them have been there themselves and they should share their stories with their children," said Bear.

Now serving as a role model for the youth, Bear says she has stressed the importance of birth control to young people as it can allow them the freedom down the road to complete their education, travel and do one of her favourite things, attend large concerts. Bear raved about attending a recent concert of R&B singer Alicia Keys and of her love for hip-hop soul singer Mary J. Blige.

Providing encouraging and healthy environments for the youth and stressing the importance of positive thinking are going to be key issues in Bear's reign as Youth Grand Chief to increase the well-being of those she is there to serve. Though youth events, gatherings, traditional activities and tournaments will always be items on Bear's agenda, teaching the youth about self-esteem will also play an important role for her.

Youth Grand Chief Stacy Bear

"I think that a lot of positive talk can help but not just from the people around you, also from yourself. I helped myself when I learned how to speak and think more positively about myself and it really helped me become more confident," said Bear.

Explaining how an Elder once told her of the importance of youth adhering to "the traditional way" by spending time in the bush as a means of finding peace, understanding and the answers to the problems they are trying to resolve, Bear said that she keeps these words close to heart. It is her belief that not only are the Cree youth interested in learning the old ways but that it's a great way to stay healthy.

Though she keeps a busy schedule these days with her new position, to keep healthy in both body and spirit Bear loves to walk out in the bush, particularly with her 84-year-old grandmother. "We go berry picking or she teaches me how to work on hides which is really good for the arms. She's 84 and I'm 28 and she can still scrape hides longer than I can," said Bear in admiration.

With a busy summer ahead of her, Bear is particularly looking forward to her swearing-in ceremony that will take place during the regional youth assembly in Mistissini July 22-24.

Though barely a few weeks into her new position, she is thrilled to have already felt so much love as the Youth Grand Chief and is looking forward to the future. When asked how the job is going, she replies with a giggle, "So far, so good!"

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Cree Regional Authority
Administration régionale Crie
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(Eeyou Istchee)
Grand conseil des Cris
(Eeyou Istchee)
G.C.C.E.I.
C.R.A.
A.R.C.

Residential School Apology

The apology by the Prime Minister of Canada on June 11, 2008 regarding residential schools is a welcome and essential step. This apology is the result of years of determined efforts by First Nations, Inuit and Métis. Survivors called on the government for full acknowledgement of past injustices, acceptance of responsibility and genuine remorse.

The apology will now be measured by the actions that follow. Words alone will not heal the deep scars from decades of emotional, physical and sexual abuse. They will not reverse the cultural genocide that occurred. We all have a responsibility to honour the lives and memories of those who suffered the trauma of human rights violations in residential schools. Their stories must be told. We must take positive initiatives to facilitate the circle of healing and foster growth and development as distinct Indigenous peoples and individuals.

The process of reconciliation is crucial to a meaningful apology. This process – responding to the history of human rights violations – should embrace a human rights-based approach, as set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The UN Declaration is the most comprehensive international instrument addressing Indigenous peoples' human rights. It outlines standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the world's Indigenous peoples. It is imperative that the Canadian government endorse the Declaration and work with Indigenous peoples on its full implementation. In this way, the traumatic legacy of residential schools can provide a new beginning for all Indigenous peoples – this time based on truth, justice and renewed hope.

Matthew Mukash
Grand Chief

Ashley Iserhoff
Deputy Grand Chief

Prepping for the future

Retiring Liberal MP John Godfrey gets the Federal Sustainable Development Act passed through parliament

By Amy German

On June 26, Canada finally made the Federal Sustainable Development Act a law with the bill receiving Royal Assent and all four political parties giving it their stamp of approval.

Having finally confirmed its commitment to the environment, the Canadian government will now be required to create and implement a government-wide sustainable development strategy and regularly evaluate the environmental consequences of its actions. The government will finally be working towards being in line with countries like Sweden and the United Kingdom whose performances have exceeded those of Canada for many years.

The private member's bill was the pet project and final act in parliament by Liberal MP John Godfrey (Don Valley West, Toronto), who will leave his post at the end of July. The bill's passing is being heralded as a milestone considering how quickly it passed through parliament.

"I was really lucky, I think I used up my last chits on this one and every bit of political capital," said Godfrey, laughing, while explaining how this act being his last might have only added to its quick passing.

Though the bill came about originally as a proposal for a sustainable development template for a model bill from the David Suzuki Foundation, its creation was a collaboration between the foundation, the Auditor General's office and The Natural Step. When it came through parliament, all four political parties ensured its swift passage as there was clear recognition from all sides that there was a dire need for it.

The system that existed previously consisted of individual departmental sustainability strategies that were created under the Commissioner for the Environment through the Auditor General's office in 1995. Though the strategies were in place and reports would be generated, there was no communication between the individual departments, no monitoring and no central plan like the ones that exist in other countries.

"Everybody was unhappy about these lackadaisical disconnected reports," said Godfrey.

The act will create the Sustainable Development Advisory Council, a volunteer board comprised of members from Aboriginal communities and representatives of business, labour and the environmental movement, whose function is to advise the government. The act is designed as a "constant work in progress." As more is learned about the environment and the impact of human beings on it, the act would evolve with new scientific evidence.

"WE ARE ASSUMING THAT THIS IS A NEVER-ENDING WORK. AS WE UNDERSTAND MORE ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS AND DANGERS, WE MAY WANT TO CHANGE THINGS."

"We are assuming that this is a never-ending work. As we understand more about environmental indicators and dangers, we may want to change things," said Godfrey.

Though normally a private member's bill does not instruct the government nor the prime minister's office on how to do its job, this particular bill has an unusual clause in it whereby the committee of the Queen's Privy Council shall have oversight of the development of the plan. The only other time phrasing like this has appeared in a private member's bill in Canadian history was for the creation of the Treasury Board in 1867.

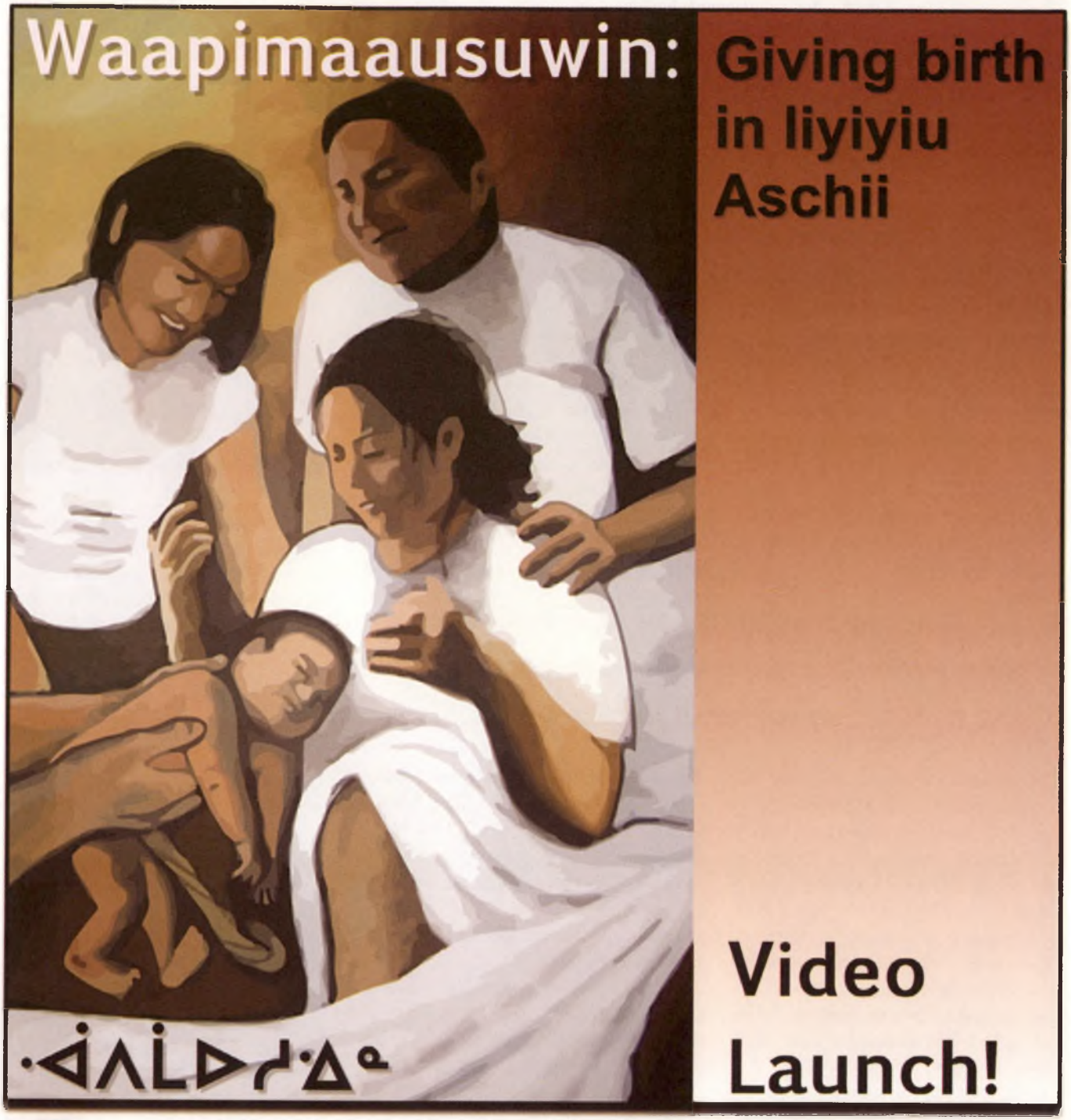
Liberal MP John Godfrey

The idea behind the bill was to have "something which is beyond any one party, that all governments agree to improve the environment. Whoever is in power at the time will be governed by this act and they will keep advancing it," said Godfrey.

The clock has already started ticking for the Department of the Environment to get started on an overall strategy for Canada's sustainable development plan though for the time being not much is expected to happen. The plan itself is not likely to be ready for another two and a half years and then a 90-day comment period will follow before it is handed over to the advisory board and then the Commissioner for the Environment.

Though they would be working for the government, advisory board members will not be paid as this would mean a new budget that would require royal recommendations thus delaying the bill and possibly stopping it altogether. In keeping with the act's spirit, board members will meet via teleconference to save on carbon.

With Canada's political leaders finally agreeing on one thing Godfrey can now retire a happy man. "Canada has so much land and we treat it in such a cavalier fashion. It was obvious to me that a plan was needed and I am glad that it became obvious to everyone else eventually," said Godfrey.



We will be launching our video on bringing back midwives and childbirth to Iiyiyiu Aschii.

When? During the Mamoweedow Minshtukch, Saturday, July 26 at 4 pm

Where? Fort George Island

All are welcome. Come join us for a movie, food and drink, and a discussion.

http://creepublichealth.org

photos by Theresa MacLeod

The fire.

The aftermath

No More True Value

On June 27, at about 9:30pm, a fire erupted at the True Value store in Mistissini and left the building in ruins.

The charred remains hold little of the original building except for its steel frame.

The Mistissini police and fire departments refused to comment to *the Nation* on the incident since it is still under investigation.

Cree-Naskapi Reappointment

On June 20, Indian and Northern Affairs minister Chuck Strahl announced the reappointment of the members of the Cree-Naskapi Commission. The tenures for Philip Awashish, Robert Kanatewat and chairperson Richard Saunders have all been renewed for another two years.

The Cree-Naskapi Act in 1984 created Canada's first Aboriginal self-government and the commission serves as an independent, non-governmental body established to monitor the Act's implementation under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and the Northeastern Quebec Agreement.

Expressing his pleasure in reappointing all three commission members at a press conference, Strahl said, "The government of Canada remains committed to making implementation as efficient as possible and will continue to work in partnership with Aboriginal organizations to realize concrete results."

As the mandate of the commission is to receive and investigate specific complaints from affected bands, groups or individuals as well as ensure the implementation of the Act, the commission is required to produce a report for Parliament every two years on its progress and status.

Armed robbery in Kuujjuarapik

On June 14 at 9:25 am the Kativik Regional Police received a phone call from the Kuujjuarapik social club. Three male suspects entered the social club and one pointed a gun at the janitors who were cleaning up.

Nobody was harmed but a good quantity of alcohol was stolen before the three fled the scene. Three arrests have been made – two of the suspects are underage and one is an adult.

"They're all known to the police for previous break-and-enters and other crimes," said Sergeant Shawn McDonald of the Kativik Regional Police. The suspects were charged with firearms-related theft and break-and-entry.

The three are scheduled to appear at Kuujjuarapik's next court hearing which will take place in October.

The Nation was unable to confirm if this is the first armed robbery in Kuujjuarapik. Officer Jean-Mathieu Lafleur stated, "As far as I know, there have been other incidents with guns but this is the first armed robbery as long as I've been working for the KRP."

Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation Bill

On June 12, Quebec Justice Minister Jacques Dupuis introduced a new anti-SLAPP bill into the National Assembly that would prohibit Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation.

Bill 99 came about to protect environmental and public interest groups against silencing lawsuits from the corporations or governing boards they are often fighting. At times, such suits can threaten the very existence of these organizations.

The bill has been tabled to the fall sitting of the National Assembly. If it passes, it will amend Quebec's Code of Civil Procedure and allow judges to throw these types of cases out of court.

The bill is designed to prevent abusive use of the courts to silence environmental and public interest groups via costly legal bills. It is yet to be seen as to how quickly a judge could act on the matter as there are currently several SLAPP suits still going through the legal system.

feature

CREES GOING GREENER

SEVERAL NEW PROJECTS INDICATE A GROWING INTEREST FOR PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT UP NORTH

By Amy German

For as much as living off the land and being kind to Mother Nature ring true with the Cree spiritually, ever since the intrusion of the modern world, most communities have sent their garbage to landfills without contemplating other options.

Though the community of Wemindji has managed to set up an award-winning recycling-incineration program, with other communities looking to follow suit, other alternatives to landfills have yet been considered.

That was until students in the French transition class (Grade 7) at the Willie J. Happyjack Memorial High School in Waswanipi and teacher Christine Branchaud teamed up with the non-profit group, Elephant Thoughts, to start something special.

Though Elephant Thoughts – which promotes high standards of education worldwide – has been running science programs for both elementary and high-school students throughout the nine Cree communities as well as other Aboriginal communities across Canada for years, the project in Waswanipi was the first of its kind.

"Instead of doing individual science-fair projects, Branchaud wanted to do a group project and recycling seemed the perfect fit," said Michael Paulin of Elephant Thoughts.

Last December, Branchaud showed the 12- and 13-year-old students in her class that the blue boxes that they saw around the school could be used for more than just garbage. At the time, her students had absolutely no concept of the words: reduce, reuse, recycle.

"Christine thought it would be great if we could do a project and begin recycling in class and hopefully then with the secondary students and it sort of steam-rolled from there," said Paulin.

For encouragement the students were allowed class time to do the sorting. Branchaud's students not only began to recycle within the classroom but they began bringing in recyclable materials from home.

When Branchaud went out to do her grocery shopping on the weekends in either Chapais or Chibougamau, she would take the recyclables with her and deposit them in the bins in either town.

As the project began to take off, students encouraged their families to sort their waste materials so that they could be recycled through the school. In turn, this brazen bunch of adolescents became teachers to their parents.

"This is a powerful message because parents should know better and probably do know better. Then they see young people come out and do something like this. You can't say anything bad about a kid who wants to reduce, reuse and recycle," said Paulin.

The project eventually became so popular that at one point Branchaud ran out of truck space so the Band Council pitched in and transported the recyclable goods to a facility.

"The school board is now pushing through a recycling initiative for next year and I believe it is for all nine communities," said Paulin.

Constantly bouncing ideas off Elephant Thoughts, Branchaud wants to branch out and set up a small composting system in the fall that could be used for her spring planting.

Through the non-profit group, she is also looking into the possibility that the girls in the Cree culture class might be interested in sewing Cree-themed canvas bags for the community members to use instead of plastic shopping bags. This would keep plastic bags out of the community's landfills.

Since many of the community's Gookgums participate in the sewing aspect of the Cree culture class, this intergenerational approach to conservation may be an innovative way to inte-

10 TIPS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

BY MANON LEGAULT

1. Eat local and, if possible, organic. Less transport means less pollution and more freshness. Also, fresh fish and caribou are better for you than the meat you can buy in the store.

2. Compost. (see last issue of the Nation, Vol 15. No. 17, for details).

3. Plant a tree. You can usually buy trees at garden stores. Some hardware stores sell them as well, usually in the spring.

4. Cars and trucks that consume less gas are better for the environment. If you can't change your vehicle, keep it in good condition; try to carpool, bike, snowshoe or walk to work. More importantly, don't leave your car idling.

5. Make your voice heard. Let your band councils know what you want by writing letters, calling them or gathering signatures for petitions.

6. Reuse. Somebody else might want or need the things you are getting rid of. You can set up a sheltered area, where people can bring their things like clothing, bikes, fridges or stereos, so that the items are not damaged by the weather. This way people can come and take

Bill Namagoose's hot water heating system

grate more community members into waste-reduction programs.

"If those students didn't have that particular teacher, they would not be recycling today," said Paulin, who is impressed by one teacher's ability to bring respect for the earth back into a Cree environment through the community's youth.

For information on Elephant Thoughts: www.elephantthoughts.com

• • •

WEMINDJI SETS THEIR RECYCLING STANDARDS EVEN HIGHER

Though it won the prestigious Phénix award from the Quebec government in 2007 for its innovative recycling program, the community of Wemindji will be taking its recycling initiative even further next month with the opening of the first-ever Cree eco-centre.

For the time being only the platform for the new building has been completed. But with construction underway, the structure is expected to be complete within a few weeks. New containers have been ordered for four different kinds of waste other than the usual plastic, glass, metals and paper that get picked up in regular recycling.

The new eco-centre will have the capacity to recycle everything from construction waste to scrap metals to bulky items, such as tires, old appliances and car bodies.

"It will be set up like a transfer station for the dumpsite. Whenever a container is full, a transporter from the south will come and pick it up and transfer it to the dumpsite," said Wemindji Environmental Administer Johnny Mark.

An added bonus to Wemindji's recycling efforts is that it has resulted in new job creation. The community now has three fulltime employees working at the incinerator yard, two others are working through a youth employment initiative and Mark is looking to hire a fulltime recycling coordinator or manager to keep things running smoothly.

At the moment there is even talk of hiring an extra weekend employee to keep the eco-centre running outside of business hours should community members wish to deposit their waste at that time.

• • •

YOU TOO CAN BE EARTH FRIENDLY!

Recycling is not the only way to preserve the environment as Embassy of the Cree Nation Executive Director Bill Namagoose proved with one innovative idea that reduced his energy consumption at home.

Fifteen years ago, Namagoose took a good look at the types of solar heating blankets used for swimming pools and the hot water generated by a garden hose sitting out in the sun and decided to set up his own homemade, passive solar water heater.

"I got some black plastic pipes and connected them to the incoming cold water. I placed the plastic pipes on my roof and then I connected the other end to my hot water tank," said Namagoose.

With the heat generated on his roof, Namagoose is able to save money on heating hot water from April to October with the system he built for only $80.

The system consists of 200 feet of black poly pipes and is able to hold about eight gallons of water at a time. With hot water coming in from his southeast-facing roof, his hot water tank hardly needs to do any work during the warmer months. Since setting up the system, he has only had to replace it once.

Namagoose also said that he swears by low-flow showerheads in his home as they only consume about 25% of the water normally used in a regular shower. "The water is mixed with air and steam. Those types of showerheads are available everywhere now for about $15 or less," said Namagoose.

what they want when it is convenient for them.

7. Recycle. If there are no facilities near you and you want to recycle, make your voice heard. Garbage ends up in dumps where it takes a long time to biodegrade, and space is not endless.

8. Reduce. If you can buy a product with less packaging, do it. It takes a lot of energy, water and oil to make packaging, which results in water and air pollution.

9. Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent ones. They might cost a bit more but last much longer, save you about $30 in the course of their lifespan, and save the environment 2000 times their own weight in greenhouse gases.

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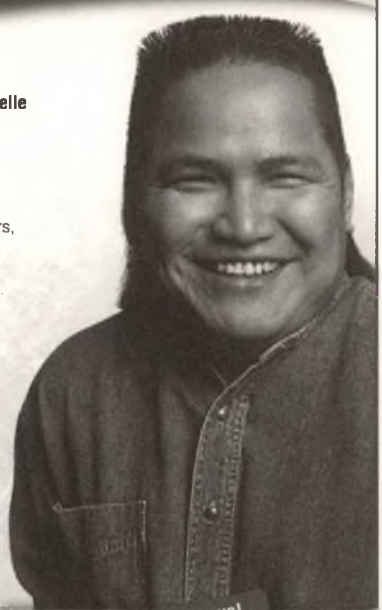

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(Eeyou Istchee)
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The Grand Council of the Crees of Eeyou Istchee wishes to congratulate newly elected Youth Grand Chief Stacy Bear!

Ms. Bear has long been involved in community affairs and she has actively voiced and stood by the interests and concerns of the Youth of Waskaganish for many years.

We are confident that she will carry out her mandate with great care, diligence and success. We applaud you, Ms. Bear, for taking on this challenge and devoting your life's purpose to making a difference. With your courage, strong character and overt display of dedication, you will surely inspire many on your new leadership journey!

We stand by your side in youthful spirits,

Matthew Mukash Grand Chief

Ashley Iserhoff Deputy Grand Chief

PROTECTING MOTHER EARTH

THE 6TH ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTAL SYMPOSIUM ORGANIZED BY UQAT IS A SUCCESS

By Claire MacKinnon

It was a meeting of minds as over 280 people gathered at the 6th annual UQAT First Nations Symposium to talk about the environment May 28.

Hosted by the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue (UQAT), the Val-d'Or conference brought together representatives from the Cree, Algonquin, Innu, Mohawk, Atikamekw and Québécois communities, ensuring a cultural diversity that conference organizers highlighted as key to the realization of the goals of the event.

"The event was a real success," said Johanne Lacasse, President of the First Nations Advisory Committee. "The large number of participants and the various regions from which they have travelled is proof of the importance that those in the region place on the quality of relationships and in the creation of partnerships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region."

Suzy Basile, coordinator of the symposium, further explained the significance of the annual event to the region. "It's a day to say to First Nations, here is the network of the university to inform and educate the people – Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, but principally non-Aboriginal."

This year's conference, titled "Our Relationship with Mother Earth", provided a forum to share Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal perspectives and knowledge of the environment.

One of the presenters was environmental activist Bertie Wapachee, Policy Advisor to the Cree Nation of Nemaska Working Group on Energy and Sustainable Development. His presentation, "The Historical Relationship between Mother Earth and Aboriginal Peoples", gave an overview of the Native perspective on the environment from pre-contact to modern times.

Wapachee explained to the audience that respect is at the centre of First Nations' relationship with Mother Earth. "We understand that our cultural, spiritual and emotional well-being and health are intricately linked to that of Mother Earth. If she suffers, we suffer."

He also described how it has been difficult to hold on to that tradition, in the face of modern industrial practices. "It hasn't been easy to maintain our knowledge, our practices, our responsibility and our relationship with Mother Earth, while watching the rest of the world stripping and destroying what we as Aboriginal people considered sacred."

Wapachee commended the new-found environmental concerns of non-Aboriginals, despite people taking so long to come to their senses. "I am tempted to say 'It's about time!', but instead I am thankful of the fact that many are awakening, thinking green, taking action and realizing that this planet is our only home and we need to take care of it."

In order to respect the green principles talked about during the conference, organizers decided to make it a zero-waste event. Different methods were employed to realize this goal, from placing recycling boxes throughout Hôtel Forestel – the venue where the conference was taking place – to minimizing packaging on the foods used. Even the presentations were made available by email only, thus allowing the symposium planners to use less paper.

Lynn Jacobs, flanked by Major Kistabish, James Papatie, Serge Ashini Goupil and Bertie William Wapachee.

Basile commended the Hôtel Forestel for its help. "We had a great collaboration with the staff at Hôtel Forestel. They were very open to assisting us, because it takes a great deal of effort to do a zero-waste event. Each person has to make a minimum effort because we cannot do this alone. At the same time we have to respect the hygiene standards of the hotel."

Other highlights of the conference included a presentation by Lynn Jacobs from the Kahnawake Environmental Protection Office, a lunch-time concert from Chisasibi's Melissa Pash, as well as exhibitions from artist Margaret Sam Cromarty, the Cree Native Arts and Crafts Association and a display by Archéo-08 showing various Native artifacts from the local Val-d'Or area.

Wapachee finished his talk on a positive note. "Recently, other cultures have begun walking on common ground, reaching consensus that now is the time to make the important turn in our history. The effort we see today to go green is exciting. People around the world, even a good number of corporations are starting to live under the same principles as our people have for generations."

Symposium organizers will start planning themes for next year's conference by September.

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WATER ALERT

photo by Stanley Saganash

AFTER A DYKE BURST WASWANIPI RESIDENTS FEAR THEIR SURROUNDING WATERS ARE CONTAMINATED

By Amy German

Due to the heavy rainfall in the last two months, a dyke – that had surrounded a settling pond containing tailings from the now-defunct Opimiska mine located between Chapais and Waswanipi – burst at the end of June.

The breach washed away nearby roads and spilled into Slam Creek that flows into the Obatigaumau River which, in turn, flows into the Waswanipi River.

At first there was as sense of panic among Waswanipi residents that both Waswanipi Lake and Waswanipi River would be contaminated as a result of the incident but after initial testing the tailings proved to be harmless.

"The biggest physical impact of the spill was that it wiped out the road and caused a lot of erosion along Slam Creek. It was a significant event. If somebody had been driving along the road when it happened they might have been killed," said Brian Craik of the Cree Regional Authority.

According to Craik, though there was an initial scare about high copper, iron and zinc levels in Slam Creek, the problem was not as bad as it was originally thought. Since the incident, Environment Canada has done a lot of testing and it seems the contents of the metals are diluting over time.

"It's not a danger to human health and the further downstream you go, by the time you get to the Waswanipi River, the levels are way under the Quebec standard for such minerals," said Craik.

At the same time, Waswanipi residents became concerned because surrounding the settling pond are old covered dumpsites that were used by Chapais up until 20 years ago. The fear was that toxins from these dumpsites could have leaked into the settling pond.

Since governmental bodies were testing specifically for toxic levels of minerals as a result of the spill, some residents started wondering why they were not testing for other substances that could have leaked into the pond, especially since dead fish were spotted in the area.

Though there are several theories why the fish died ranging from the impact of the dyke bursting to possible contamination to the dead fish being the result of a fisherman throwing them back into the river, nothing has been conclusive.

Waswanipi Deputy Chief Paul Gull even went fishing on July 6 to investigate. He took his boat from the Waswanipi River to Waswanipi Lake and said he didn't see any dead fish in the area.

"The ones I found were caught on my hook," said Gull who felt confident enough to eat the fish he caught that day as he believes the diversion systems in place are sufficient to keep Waswanipi's waters clean.

According to Craik, testing the waters for organic compounds was not deemed necessary by Alan Penn and Ginette Lajoie, both scientists who work for the CRA.

Despite this, Paul Dixon of the Cree Trappers Association, who noticed a foul smell emanating from Slam Creek, is not as confident as Penn and Lajoie. Concerned enough to contact *the Nation*, Dixon wrote, "The industrialized world is destroying us and hunting societies around the world. If we cannot see or feel what is destroying us today, how can we live tomorrow? We must win today so that we can live tomorrow."

After careful deliberation at a general assembly meeting in regards to the bursted dyke and the fallout from it, Waswanipi residents decided to have their environmental administrator look into hiring an independent company to monitor the water in the area. Both the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Department of the Environment will also be monitoring the effects of the incident.

According to Craik, if anything positive came out of this incident it was the perfect opportunity to test the relationship between the Grand Council CRA, the Department of the Environment and the Department of Natural Resources. Since none of the departments had worked together before in a time of crisis, communication between the environmental administrators and governmental environment officials was not as efficient as it could have been.

"There wasn't much of a pre-established network so as soon as one party found out they phoned up the others and the system got put together for the first time," said Craik.

All parties have since agreed to work on improving communication so that should another incident like this one arise, a more efficient system will be in place to handle it.

For the past five decades, singer-songwriter Buffy Sainte-Marie has never wavered in speaking out on Native issues

By Martin Siborok

Buffy Sainte-Marie needs no introduction. The world-famous singer-songwriter has spoken out for decades for those who are voiceless.

In the early 1960s few were focusing on Native issues. For this Saskatchewan-born Cree folk-singer, those issues were never out of sight. She told people around the world about the tragic plight of the North American Indian in her songs, in her actions, in her life. And she does the same today.

At 67, Sainte-Marie, singer, actor, visual artist, teacher and activist, continues to explore, educate and entertain.

Contacted by phone at her home in the mountains of Kauai, a Hawaiian island she has lived on since the early 1970s, Sainte-Marie is warm and welcoming. "I live in the mountains away from everybody. I've been here for over 40 years. I live with 26 goats. They are terrific. They are just as friendly and fun as cats and dogs. I highly recommend them if you have the room," she says with a laugh.

While Sainte-Marie sounds light-hearted, she still has her serious side, especially when it comes to Native issues. So it was with great joy that she shared her thoughts on the Canadian government's apology to Native people regarding residential schools.

"I was travelling at the time of the apology, so I watched it all on TV the following morning. Wasn't it amazing! It's been a long, long time coming. I wonder if (non-Native) people really understand how much this means to Native people.

"I hope when people see Aboriginal folks out on the street not looking so good, they will not be so quick to judge. You have to understand that most of us were raised without parents and without parenting skills. There have been three generations raised who never knew love and who never knew how to help babies and children or how to make a family work. When you take that away from thousands and thousands of people, generation after generation, it has a major impact.

> "I DIDN'T LEARN A LOT ABOUT INDIANS GROWING UP. BUT MY MOM ALWAYS TOLD ME THAT WHAT I READ IN THE HISTORY BOOKS AND SAW IN THE MOVIES WAS MOSTLY FICTION."

"The fact that government made the apology underscores the fact that this issue really did happen. With government owning up to it, I think, makes it easier for everyone to forgive and actually do something about it to make things better."

Born in 1941 on the Piapat Reserve in Saskatchewan's Qu'Appelle Valley, Sainte-Marie was orphaned as an infant and adopted by a "white" family in Maine. "My mother who raised me was part Mi'kmaq so I had a small connection to

my Native roots. But it was kind of a cocktail-party Indian situation, where you say you are part Indian and that's the end of it. In other words, 'My grandmother was one quarter something or other,'" Sainte-Marie says affecting a deep masculine voice. "It was very much a point of pride, but it was not a point of communication, information or connection to Aboriginal people.

"In the town I was raised – which I sometimes call Javex, USA – there was only one other Aboriginal person and he was the mailman. He and his wife were so nice to me. Most people didn't know that I was Aboriginal, because they believed there weren't any more Indians. You find many in New England who are not aware that there are Aboriginal people. 'Oh, maybe there are few in Arizona, but not around here.'

"I didn't learn a lot about Indians growing up. But my mom always told me that what I read in the history books and saw in the movies was mostly fiction."

Sainte-Marie was in her late teens when she reconnected with her Cree relatives in Saskatchewan, who adopted her according to traditional customs. "I was welcomed back with open arms and we've been very close ever since. I'm a very lucky person – I have two families, two cultural backgrounds and I smile a lot."

When it comes to speaking Cree, Sainte-Marie admits her command is limited. "Most people of my generation were raised without their language – let alone someone like me coming from the outside. Many of my nieces and nephews have gone to college where they were able to take Cree classes. And others never left the reserve and so they speak Cree right from the family. It's two different approaches, but both are wonderful."

Sainte-Marie is quick to point out that the loss of identity is a predicament shared globally by all Aboriginal people, who are trying to strengthen their connection to their culture and language. "It's going on all over the indigenous world, not only in North America. Aboriginal people are trying to revitalize our languages. Though it might not seem like a big thing – you don't hear about it in the press – the revitalization of our cultures is very important to us. We want to put it back together and pass it on."

When it comes to dealing with Native issues, Sainte-Marie definitely sees a difference in approach between the Canadian and U.S. governments. "The further south you go in the Western Hemisphere, the worse it gets. In Uruguay, there are no Indians – they were all eradicated. It was total genocide. Chile is not a lot of fun either.

"But Canada is the best. There is a long way to go, but we're going. In the States, there's no such thing as APTN. And what happened last month in Ottawa with the apology is unthinkable in the States.

"There's a difference in our histories too. In the States, the gobbley greeds went west faster. In Canada, things developed a little slower. Therefore there was more time for people – both Native and non-Native – to prepare and learn.

The Concert

Singer-songwriter Buffy Sainte-Marie was in Montreal recently and performed twice at the Jazz Festival. First, she participated in the free outdoor tribute to acclaimed singer-poet Leonard Cohen on June 26 and sang *The Partisan*, taken from his second album, *Songs From A Room*.

The following night, Sainte-Marie had her own show and played a mix of old and new material. The setlist included her "hits" – *Universal Solider*, *Until It's Time for You to Go* and *Up Where We Belong* (from the film *An Officer and A Gentleman*) – and four songs from her new album, *Running for the Drum*, which will be released in September.

Looking and sounding in great shape, the short-statured Sainte-Marie commanded a big presence. Backed by three musicians and two back-up singers, she revealed herself as an accomplished musician as she moved effortlessly from guitar to keyboards to mouth bow. Throwing traditional chants into many of her songs, the good-humoured Sainte-Marie introduced an array of love and protest songs. On one song she's laughing about teepee-creeping on the Powwow trail (*Darling Don't You Cry*), the next she's addressing the tragic plight of the Native American (*Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee*).

In recognition of the Canadian government's apology on residential schools, Sainte-Marie sang *Relocation Blues* written by Floyd Red Crow Westerman. She also saluted several martyrs in the struggle for Aboriginal rights, including imprisoned activist Leonard Peltier and Dudley George, who was shot by an Ontario Provincial Police officer at Ipperwash in 1995 – both victims of greed and corruption.

Buffy Sainte-Marie's set-list
at the Jazz Festival, June 27

Piney Wood Hills
Fallen Angels
Cripple Creek
He's An Indian Cowboy At The Rodeo
Cho Cho Fire (new)
Up Where We Belong
Relocation Blues
Working For The Government (new)
Still This Love Goes On (new)
Universal Soldier
No No Keshagesh (new)
Darling Don't Cry
Until It's Time For You To Go
Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee
Starwalker

The Partisan (encore)
Goodnight (encore)

the Nation
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"In Canada, we have lawyers, teachers and a wealth of people with advanced degrees. We also have politicians. Now what we need to develop is good leadership."

For Sainte-Marie, poverty is the most pressing issue confronting Aboriginal people today. "Besides drugs, alcohol and poor health, the biggest issue is poverty. It's poverty and the lack of self-esteem, the lack of being connected to the bigger society. There is still a lot of good work to be done."

Sainte-Marie realizes that for many communities one way of combating poverty is opening casinos. It's an approach she is not completely comfortable with, but she has seen the benefits. "Casinos are the first economic upgrade communities have ever had. Naturally they face the same problems that everybody else does when dealing with new money and new experiences.

"But on the other hand, you see paved roads, you see schools, you see hospitals and you see adequate housing. Forty years ago when I first started travelling around, you didn't see that. Back then it was real bad poverty. Though I'm kind of hot-and-cold on casinos, I must say many communities have done very well making the investments work for their people."

Besides being an entertainer, Sainte-Marie is a teacher and has always placed great value on education. In 1969, she founded the Nihewan Foundation for Native American Education and nine years later, she set up the Cradleboard Teaching Project.

"When I was in my 20s, I was a young singer with too much money and a lot of airplane tickets. So I would use my plane tickets to inform myself about indigenous peoples. I would have a concert in Paris and then a couple days later I would be up in the Arctic with the Sami people. If I did a concert in New York City, I would go to Akwesasne after that. In Sidney (Australia), I would visit Aborigine people in the outback.

"That's what my life has been like. It's like having two families. I've always remained connected to both and been an educational bridge between the two. In my 20s I founded the Nihewan Foundation and we've been handing out scholarships ever since.

"Then in 1978, when my son was in Grade 5, I started the Cradleboard project. It's involved with language and curriculum issues and we try to make everything free. If people are interested in knowing more, we have curriculum units available free online (www.cradleboard.org). I know a lot of people go into business to get rich and create a large infrastructure, but we're just the opposite."

Besides having degrees in Eastern philosophy and teaching and a PhD in fine arts – all from the University of Massachusetts – Sainte-Marie has been bestowed with several honourary degrees. The most recent one she received was a honourary Doctor of Laws degree from Carleton University in Ottawa on June 13.

"In my speech, I mentioned my hero, Tim Berners-Lee. He's the guy who invented the Internet with his team at MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology). It was his decision to keep the Internet free so that we can all use it. If he had made a different decision none of us would be able to use it and it would be in the hands of politicians and millionaires.

"Sometimes you can make a little decision that impacts people hugely. And my scholarship foundation went on to impact people hugely. Based on his model, I always wanted to keep it free. Now elementary students around the world can study the Mohawks or the Navajos."

Like a teacher, Sainte-Marie uses songwriting as a way of communicating ideas and opinions on political and Native issues. "It is my favourite style of creative writing or journalism. A song has to be as focused, as concise and as engaging as a piece of journalism in order to be successful. Think of *Universal Solider* or *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* or *My Country 'Tis of Thy People You're Dying*. If you can do it in a three-minute song instead of a 400-page book, you've really accomplished something."

Best known for *Universal Solider*, the anti-war song is still as relevant today as it was 44 years ago when she wrote it in 1964 to address the Vietnam War. "I wish there was no longer any need for that song, but there is. I went about writing it not as a hippie songwriter wanting to entertain people, but as a determined college girl trying to create a thesis about a serious issue. It's not the same as writing a song like *Until It's Time for You to Go*. It's a different process and very deliberate. So I'm not surprised about its relevance today, I crafted it that way."

One old song Sainte-Marie rarely performs is *Now That The Buffalo's Gone*. "It's a hard-hitting song that I wrote more than 40 years ago. It's Indian 101 for people who really don't know anything about how it got to be this way. People just think we were a little bit backwards. They don't realize what was deliberately done by all the wrong white people."

The ever-positive Sainte-Marie will continue her role as an entertainer and educator. "There is still so much work to be done. We need to inspire young people to perceive and concentrate and enjoy the great things in life. Then we will be doing them a good service."

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Seeking gold

Wabun First Nations sign an exploration agreement with Augen Gold

by Xavier Kataquapit

Three Wabun Tribal Council First Nations and Augen Gold Corporation signed an exploration agreement on July 9. The signing took place at the Wabun Tribal Council office complex in Timmins, Ontario.

Mattagami, Brunswick House and Flying Post First Nations, through the signing of this agreement with Augen Gold, have the benefit of working with the company from the very onset of exploration and development on the Jerome Mine site, west of Gogama.

Mattagami First Nation has been communicating with Augen Gold since September 2007 to negotiate this agreement. An exploration agreement, which is generally struck in the very early stages of development, deals with benefits, guidelines and the commitment to negotiate an Impact Benefit Agreement (IBA) if the property proceeds to a mining operation.

The exploration agreement provides to the First Nations consulting and advisory services, employment and training, business opportunities, ongoing communication and environmental consultation. Augen Gold is also providing shares of the company to the Wabun First Nations.

PHOTO BY XAVIER KATAQUAPIT

Seated (l-r): Chief Rene Ojeebah, Chief Walter Naveau, Michael Fowler, Chief Murray Ray. Standing (l-r): Christopher Marmont, Shawn Batise, Chris McKay.

"THIS IS A NEW BEGINNING FOR OUR PEOPLE. IN THE PAST, WE WERE RARELY CONSULTED OR INCLUDED IN ANY RESOURCE-BASED INITIATIVES ON OUR LANDS," SAID CHIEF OJEEBAH.

Chief Walter Naveau and lead negotiator Chris McKay are excited about the potential in working with Augen Gold.

"I am very happy with and proud of the job that Chris McKay and Shawn and Jason Batise have done in providing an environment where positive agreements like this one with Augen Gold are negotiated from the onset of developments on our territorial lands," said Chief Naveau.

Before Augen Gold started exploration on its Jerome Mine site, company leadership decided to consult with Mattagami First Nation and ultimately with Wabun Tribal Council's three First Nations.

"It is important for Augen Gold to have an exploration agreement in place with our First Nation neighbours so that we all benefit and there is a mutual understanding as we hopefully make our way to the development of a mining operation," said Michael Fowler, President and Chief Executive Officer of Augen Gold.

Mattagami First Nation leadership and Wabun Tribal Council have paved the way for consultation and potential partnering with resource-based companies considering or involved in initiatives on or near First Nation lands. Wabun, as part of a development strategy, has promoted a willingness to consult and negotiate with resource-based companies with a focus on benefits to First Nations, sound environmental practices and meaningful partnership.

"It is gratifying to see a company like Augen Gold coming to our Wabun First Nations early on in their exploration. Mattagami leadership and Chris McKay have done an excellent job in assisting to bring Augen Gold to the table and we anticipate a full range of benefits for our community members as a result of our ongoing relationship with the company," said Shawn Batise, Executive Director of Wabun Tribal Council.

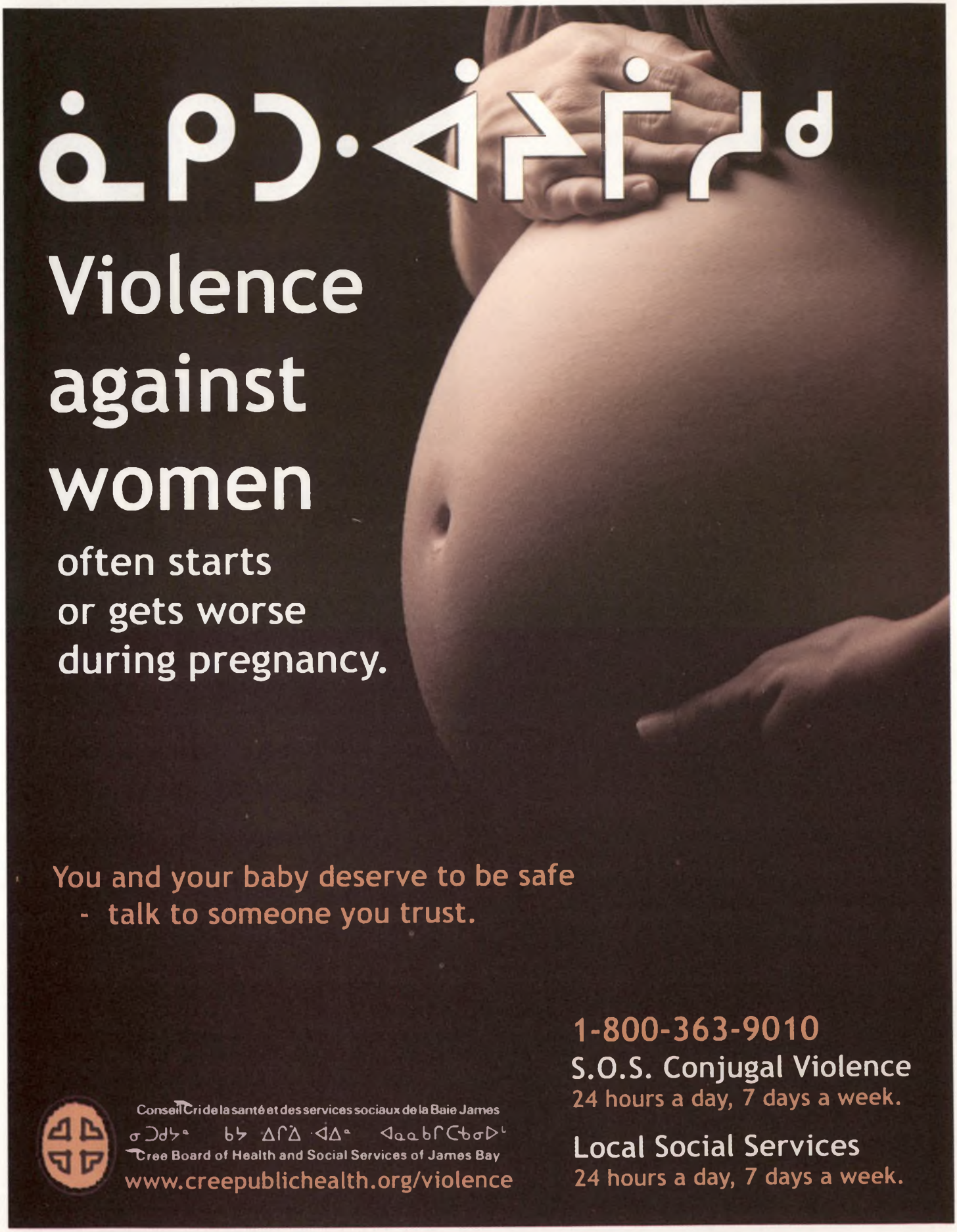
Chief Rene Ojeebah of Brunswick House First Nation commented that the agreement with Augen heralds a new era for his community.

"This is a new beginning for our people. In the past, we were rarely consulted or included in any resource-based initiatives on our lands. I have great hope that this will mean employment and long-term benefits for our people," said Chief Ojeebah.

Chief Murray Ray of Flying Post First Nation pointed out a new reality with government and resource-based developers is providing hope to his First Nation members.

Wabun Tribal Council is a regional territorial organization that represents seven First Nation communities in northeastern Ontario and is directed by its respective Chiefs.

Augen Gold Corporation is a gold exploration mining company that holds mining claims over a 45-kilometre length in townships 40 kilometres west of Gogama. The company's claims include the site of the former producing Jerome Gold Mine. Augen Gold's objective is to explore the Jerome Mine in order to determine the gold potential and to continue to expand its property portfolio with prospective mineral assets.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UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

Field Of Dreams

by Xavier Kataquapit

It is a hot mid-summer day and we are all gathered in the big open field behind the school. My friends and I are hanging onto the chain-link fence watching another game of adults playing a round of baseball in the far corner of the field away from the school.

It is not much of a baseball field. The ground is a bare grey-coloured dusty clay that has dried up in the summer heat. This is a precious period in the summer when all the adults and teenagers take advantage of the seldom-used backfield of the school.

When it rains, the grey clay turns into a muddy, slippery and slimy mess which is difficult to walk on. When it is wet, the clay sticks to your shoes in heavy globs that weigh down your feet. The little bit of grass that grows in the infield shows as tufts of green and the outfield is filled with tall grass, fully grown green weeds and dandelions.

The school sits on the other side of the field and it is a benchmark for the strongest players who take up the bat. Everyone knows that whoever hits the walls of the brown-coloured slat-covered school scores a definite home run. Few seldom do achieve this feat and anyone that does is held in great esteem for their accomplishment.

The field is dotted with players taking up random positions to cover the infield and outfield. There is no ordered players' list and the only positions that are certain are for the four bases and the pitcher. Of course the number of field players is determined by the number of available baseball gloves.

Equipment was always hard to come by and half the players brought their own gloves and after every inning, players exchanged them with the opposing team while others lined up to bat. Most of the time the bat was a battered, dented pock-marked piece of aluminum. The thing was that in Attawapiskat that bat would have served a 100 purposes as well as being used for baseball.

When my friends and I were not behind the chain-link fence, we did our best to find the best seats. Our first choice was always to climb the 20-foot high batters' box that surrounded the home plate and we could watch the game from high above. If we worked up the nerve to climb the high fencing and ignored the warnings from adults we were able to lie on our stomachs and watch the game from an overhead view. This never lasted long as the grownups did not really appreciate their audience dangling above their heads. They were also worried that we would fall and hurt ourselves and that would interrupt their game.

Our second perch was the burned-out wreckage of an abandoned excavator. It sat just off of the right field and it provided a good vantage-point to watch the game. The rusted remains of the excavator was the remnants of a late-night fire that had burned down one of the town's large heavy-equipment garages. The building burned and the fire also consumed the old John Deere excavator. The long heavy-lifting arm acted as our multileveled seating and the rusted and charred remains of wires, cables and hoses provided enough grasping points to help us climb every corner of the old piece of machinery.

It felt good to watch a gathering of people from the community in a game of baseball. Younger athletic teenagers tried their best to throw the fastest pitch. They competed for the hardest swings of the bat or the most dramatic catches. The older players brought with them a slow, steady and strong presence. Most of these men were the traditional types that were more comfortable living on the land but still found time for and had a passion for baseball. Batting order was set for the older more-experienced men to go first and then the younger boys got their turn. Even though the field players were disorganized there was a hierarchy that was followed with the older players taking the infield and the younger faster boys taking the outfield.

No one ever really kept tabs on who won or lost a game. Every game, players were mixed into new groups and no one followed which team was the best or worst. Players were judged on who was the strongest and fastest or who happened to have a good glove at the time. If you at least had a glove, no matter how bad a player you were, you were an important part of the team.

That wonderful field for baseball dreams is gone now. The right field was filled by the new Vezina Secondary School extension and the infield is now where the new Reg Louttit Sports Complex is located. The left field has disappeared with the addition of portable units that make up the new elementary school and the old brown homerun wall of the school now sits abandoned. That school, the J.R. Nakogee Elementary School, has acquired some fame nationally as it has been closed for several years due to oil contamination. The community is fighting to convince the federal government to live up to its promise and build a new school for the children.

I enjoy remembering that lumpy old field. All the sights and sounds come back in my dreams of those days. The game play never really mattered to us. It was more about spending time as a group on a hot summer day in the middle of the mushkeg with some focus and intent that took us all away to some baseball fantasy land. We may not have had much but at the very least we had our field of dreams.

CLASSIFIEDS

BIRTHDAYS

I want to wish a happy birthday to a very special woman in my life. Her name is Frances George. Mom, thank you for your kind encouragement during tough times. Thank you for always being there for me and my family, especially my babies. We love you so much, Louise & family.

We want to wish a happy 2nd birthday to our adorable daughter (& Sister) Laurie-June Pepabano. Her birthday is June 28th, 2008. 'Hope you had fun at your birthday party. 'Love always, your Mom, Dad & Bro Tatum-Jayce XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOX

Wishing a happy 2nd birthday to a very special guy, born July 20th, 2006. Jarome Tyson Petawabano–Jolly, you made us great!!! We hope you have many more. We love you so much. Your great-grandparents, Norman & Maggie.

2 Fun days!
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*Includes lodging for double or quadruple occupancy and admission for 2 people or 2 adults and 2 children (17 years and under) to Parc Safari for 2 consecutive days. Valid from June 21 to September 01, 2008, subject to availability. Off-season rates also available from May 16 to June 20, from August 25 to 29 and from September 02 to October 13, 2008. Taxes extra. 2-night packages also available (1)Rates starting at.

Happy birthday to my daughter, Sherry-Ann, on July 11th. I sit here and think back to the day you were born. You, tucked away within my body, just the two of us. We shared private moments that no one else could take part in. A mother/daughter bond created even before we laid eyes on one another. I want you to remember who you are, remember that you are strong and that you can accomplish anything, no matter how long the roads to your goals look. Nothing is impossible. Always have faith! Remember that everyone is different and that different is beautiful. Be kind and compassionate. Not only to everything around you, but also to yourself. No matter how old or how big you grow, you will be my baby and I will always love you. I am so glad that God chose me to be your mommy.

Belated birthday greetings go out to two wonderful people: (1) my beautiful daughter, Natasha Louttit. You are blazing a remarkable trail for yourself and I am so proud of you! I loved you from the first moment I felt you move inside me and I love you more today as I see the strong woman you are becoming, Mom. (2) My loving brother, Gord, you are truly one of the best! Over the years you have been my greatest help and support; the one person who is always there for me, and I deeply appreciate it from the bottom of my heart. With love, sis Eva.

I would like to wish my husband, Sinclair R. Neeposh, a happy 29th birthday! I just want to tell you just how much I am thankful to have you in my life as my best friend, my companion, and my husband. I love you so much, and so deeply. I would never have made it to this day without you! When I am with you, all my worries disappear. I just love spending my life with you and I want to share all my dreams with you for as long as I live! I am so proud of you for showing your children just how much of a loving father you are, and showing everyone just how much you would do for your children! We will always love you! My love for you has no end, has no beginning, my love for you is forever! I thank God that I found a man that I truly love! Happy birthday my love! I am still wondering where I should take you for your birthday! Or what I should give you. Lol! I love you! Love always & forever more, ur wife & children: Melanie & children! XoXoX

Happy birthday to our Granny Franny, on July 14th. We love you very much!!! From two of your most adorable grandkids, L-J & T-J.

WEDDINGS

I want to wish Lee Ann Gilpin and Earl Danlyluk my best wishes and lots of love for their wedding on August 8th. I won't be able to make it, but be sure my heart will be in Wemindji with you that day. Take care and big hugs for all the daycare girls.

PERSONAL MESSAGES

Cree students desperately looking for apartments in Val-d'Or (one 2 bedroom and one 3 bedroom). If you are renting an apartment space and don't use it much, Cree students are preparing their fall semester and need a place to live! Please contact Louise Bryce at the College de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue at 819-874-3837 extension 228 if you feel you can help out! Thank you for your collaboration!

2 floor, apartment for rent on nice, quiet street in NDG area. 2 closed bedrooms upstairs and large finished basement (can be used as additional room, office or rec room) with storage and laundry area. 2 washrooms, 1 full washroom upstairs and _ in basement. Large fenced-in backyard. 10 minute ride to Vendome Metro, 25 minutes downtown or 20 minute bike ride (near bike path) to Concordia. 1 block from Blockbuster, 24 hr. corner store, Provigo and Pharmaprix. Rent is $1165 and the place is heated with oil. Rent is included. With two kitchens, the place is ideal for a family and/or students sharing space. Available for July 25th (first month free - July) or August 1st - rent must be paid for August. Contact Shana at 514-754-2063. Moving due to purchase of new home. Mandy

CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Where to get help: bilingual, anonymous, confidential and free phone services, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Kid's Help Phone Line: 1-800-668-6868 (www.kidshelpphone.ca)

Youth helpline: 1-800-263-2266 (www.teljeunes.com)

Parent helpline: 1-800-361-5085 (www.parenthelpline.ca)

Drugs: help and reference: 1-800-265-2626 (www.drogue-aidereference.qc.ca)

Gambling: help and reference: 1-800-265-2626 (www.info-reference.qc.ca)

S.O.S. Conjugal Violence: 1-800-363-9010 (www.sosviolenceconjugale.com)

Health and Sexuality resources center: 1-888-855-7432 (Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm) (www.criss.org)

Gay Helpline: 1-888-505-1010 (Monday to Friday, 8 am to 3 am and Saturday-Sunday, 11 am to 3 am)

The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal: 1-866-403-4688. (www.nwsm.info)

Residential School Survivors:

A 24 hour toll-free crisis line is available to provide immediate emotional assistance and can be reached 24-hours a day, seven days a week: 1-866-925-4419. Other support services and information for survivors is available on the AFN website at: http://www.afn.ca/residentialschools/resources.html.

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CAMPING PREMIER *** (Aut.15/sortie 1, St-Bernard, 5 min. du Parc, avec 2 services piscine ext.) 1 877 246-4807 108 $* 141 $*
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BEST WESTERN HÔTEL NATIONAL BROSSARD (déjeuner inclus, piscine intérieure) 1 800 465-0841 169 $* 218 $*
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* Incluant l'hébergement en occupation double ou quadruple et l'admission pour 2 personnes ou 2 adultes et 2 enfants (17 ans et moins) au Parc Safari 2 journées consécutives. Valide du 21 juin au 01 septembre 2008, selon disponibilité. Tarification basse saison aussi disponible du 16 mai au 20 juin, du 25 au 29 août et du 02 septembre au 13 octobre 2008. Taxes en sus. Possibilité de séjour de 2 nuits. (1) Tarif à partir de.

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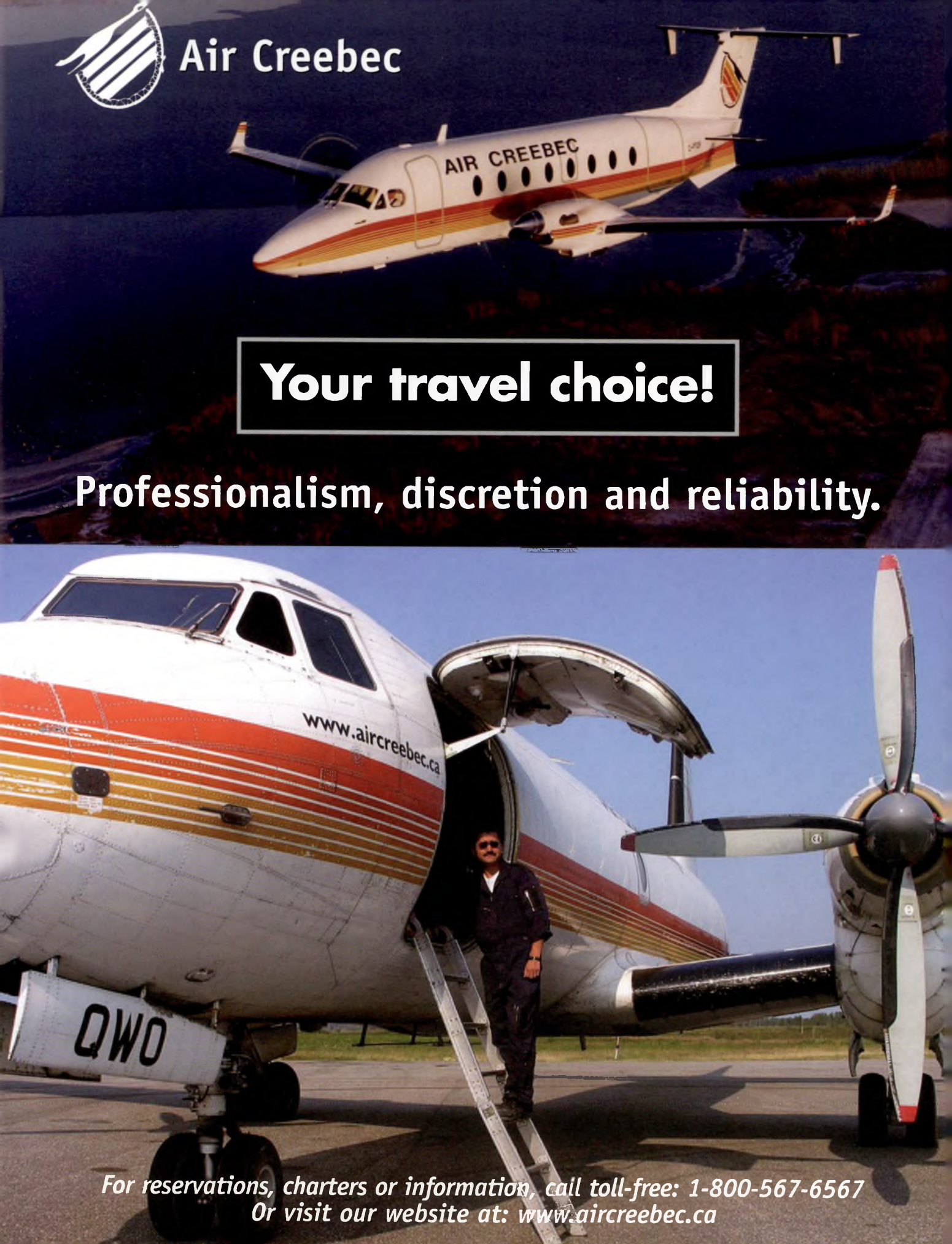
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